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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ES](#)
SUBJECT: GOES SEEKS EMBASSY SUPPORT WITH DHS ON DEPORTATION
PROCESSING ISSUES

REFS: A) Barclay-Myers telecom, 6/16/06; B) Myers-Barclay e-mail,
6/16/06

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Senior GOES officials appealed to Ambassador on June 14 for help with El Salvador's deportations-related agenda with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Ambassador spoke with DHS Assistant Secretary Julie Myers to discuss the issue of DHS financial support for document processing. Progress on this issue and others will be essential to maintaining the financially hard-strapped GOES' focus on DHS needs. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On June 14, Ambassador met with Salvadoran Minister of Interior (Gobernacion) Rene Figueroa, Director of Migration Jorge Santibanez Huete, Commissioner for Deportations Jaime Vigil and Salvadoran Ambassador to the United States Rene Leon at the Minister's request. Figueroa expressed frustration over the lack of progress from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on deportation-related issues important to El Salvador and appealed to the Ambassador personally to help move the agenda forward. El Salvador "felt abandoned," he said. Figueroa also said that, given the lack of responsiveness from DHS on a list of items important to the GOES, his government was questioning the political value of cooperating with the U.S. on deportations.

¶3. (SBU) Minister Figueroa told the Ambassador that the GOES had made progress on measures asked of it by DHS - in particular, lifting the cap on the number of deportees who could arrive on a single flight and in a given week, and receiving various DHS delegations - but issues important to El Salvador had gone unaddressed. Leon shared with the Ambassador the draft text of a DHS/ICE press release [relating to using videoconferences to expedite out-processing of deportees] which, they said, would put the GOES in a very difficult situation politically. Figueroa referred to strong criticism the GOES had received domestically for lifting the cap. Leon commented that it appeared DHS was interested only in removal of Salvadorans from the United States and had not followed up on the comprehensive plan. Leon brought to the meeting a copy of a June 9 letter he had sent the Secretary, conveying a letter from Figueroa to Secretary Chertoff. This letter listed 7 items on which the GOES awaited DHS action. Leon stressed the importance of the USG coming forward even with small things to help it manage the political issue. Figueroa appealed to the Ambassador to help push El Salvador's agenda, naming the \$40 processing fee, videoconferencing, and the prisoner exchange treaty.

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador expressed disappointment with progress to date, especially with the processing fee which had been promised by senior DHS officials during their visit to El Salvador in September. Embassy officials also reviewed some areas in which the USG had sought to carry through, citing the server to be provided by INL and

collaboration on sharing biometric information. Emboffs urged GOES to approach the Department of Justice to advance the prisoner exchange treaty, as DOJ had jurisdiction; Leon asked the Embassy to help engage Justice. (Figueroa noted that they could discuss how to move the treaty quickly at the multilateral level if that necessary. He said that the GOES was almost ready to send ratification of the prisoner exchange treaty to its legislature.) He also asked Ambassador to convey GOES concerns through State Department channels. Immigration Director Santibanez added that GOES officials had met with INL Assistant Secretary Ann Patterson, who had indicated that she had funds for biometrics. He asked Embassy to convey to her that the GOES was on top of the issue.

¶5. (SBU) Ambassador spoke with DHS Assistant Secretary Julie Myers on June 16 to review problems related to the processing fee. Myers informed the Ambassador later that day that she had subsequently spoken to Santibanez, and that she believed that the issue was on its way to resolution.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Ambassador had pressed hard to have the GOES meet DHS goals, using the DHS processing fee as leverage in getting the financially hard-pressed GOES to commit resources necessary for expeditious reception of more deportees. The lengthy delay in working out a mechanism for delivering the document processing fee has undercut USG credibility. Several of the other issues raised in the Figueroa letter are not directly related to the deportation issue, but progress in other areas as appropriate would be helpful in maintaining GOES focus on DHS' needs.